

**COOK CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
WATER & RADIO METER PROJECT
FEBRUARY 25, 2016 – COOK CITY HALL – 1 PM**

TIME AND PLACE: A Special Meeting of the Cook City Council was held at 1 PM on Thursday, February 25, 2016 at the Cook City Hall.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Harold Johnston called the meeting to order at 1 PM.

ATTENDANCE: Present at roll call were Mayor Harold Johnston and City Councilors Jody Bixby, Karen Hollanitsch and Elizabeth Storm. Absent was City Councilor Kim Brunner. Also present were Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer Theresa Martinson, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Stephanie Beaudry, Maintenance Supervisor Bud Ranta, Maintenance employee Don Flack, Ferguson Waterworks employees Todd Phillips and Scott Holmwig, and Cook News Herald.

Todd Phillips of Ferguson Waterworks gave a presentation regarding Neptune Water Meters & Radios.

Neptune & Ferguson

Neptune has been around for 100 years. It is the largest meter/radio company in the country. Neptune develops, engineers, and makes everything in the United States; they are the only meter & radio company which does that. They have been ranked #1 by American Waterworks for 10 years. They have a “First pass” drive-by read rate of 99.8%. They are the only company that makes their products forward migratable and backwards compatible.

Ferguson has been a distributor of Neptune since 1975; they are a “Level 1” distributor. Ferguson has their own installation group. They don’t use subcontractors. Ferguson has its distribution center in Minnetonka; its business office is in Blaine.

Phillips spoke about the two valves on a water meter and the Federal NSF 61 Standard which pertains to lead content in products. Neptune stopped making lead products in 2001, 13 years before the federal mandate.

The Neptune radio technology is guaranteed accurate. Neptune has had four different generations of radios because of the chip manufacturer. The R900i product has a 20-year warranty.

Questions

Mayor Johnston asked if building material makes a difference in reading efficiency. Phillips said that certain materials might weaken a signal, but not terribly. The worst offender is stucco because of the chicken wire used to apply it. Concrete is not an issue. And of course, the R900i won’t transmit as far in a basement as it would in an upper level. 80% of transmissions issues are related to the wiring, not the unit itself.

Councilor Bixby asked if the unit would be affected by cold. Phillips said extreme heat is more of an issue than cold; cold isn’t a problem.

Councilor Bixby asked if there were any issues regarding electricity. Phillips said no. The units have batteries. Bixby also asked if the hard water in Cook would cause any issues. Phillips showed the Council the inside of the meter and talked about its workings. He said over time hard water would slow things down but reminded everyone of the warranty.

Maintenance Supervisor Ranta asked if there were any new technological developments coming up. Phillips shared that cellular technology is the new thing, 4G LTE.

Councilor Bixby asked about how the readers worked with the City's computer system. Phillips shared that they do a lot of work with Banyon (the City of Cook's utility software); their software is compatible. The Neptune Insight Software dumps its information right into Banyon. It is a smooth integration.

Administrator Martinson asked how long the install would take. Phillips said that there were six things that needed to happen:

1. scrub the data
2. work with Banyon
3. order the materials
4. send letters to customers
5. scheduling—online or calling
6. start installing. It takes about ½ hour per home. Ferguson makes 3-4 attempts to reach out to the customer before coming back to the City for help.

Mayor Johnston asked who would install the fixed system. Phillips said that is the only thing they contract out; they have an electrical contractor, Omni, out of the cities.

Councilor Storm asked about a comment Phillips made regarding "unhappy customers". Storm asked for an example of one of Ferguson's "unhappy customers". Phillips shared a story about Neptune's 3rd generation meter/radio which experienced corrosion. He went on to say that is how Neptune's 4th generation meter/radio came to be hermetically sealed.

Councilor Storm asked city employees Ranta & Flack what they thought of the Neptune system. Ranta likes the internal workings of the meter. Flack likes the availability of assistance and service.

Administrator Martinson asked what the City's next step is. Councilor Bixby thinks numbers need to be looked at. Phillips stated that he will put a proposal together. Councilor Storm thanked Phillips and Holmwig for their time.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Council, motion to adjourn at 2:25 PM was made by Councilor Hollanitsch and second by Councilor Bixby. **MOTION CARRIED**

CITY OF COOK – Cook, MN 55723

Harold Johnston, Mayor

Recorder: Stephanie Beaudry, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

Attest: Theresa Martinson, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer